

199—19.15(476) Customer contribution fund.

19.15(1) *Applicability and purpose.* This rule applies to each gas public utility, as defined in Iowa Code sections 476.1 and 476.1B. Each utility shall maintain a program plan to assist the utility's low-income customers with weatherization and to supplement assistance received under the federal low-income home energy assistance program for the payment of winter heating bills.

19.15(2) *Program plan.* Each utility shall have on file with the board a detailed description of its program plan. At a minimum, the plan shall include the following information:

a. A list of the members of the governing board, council, or committee established to determine the appropriate distribution of the funds collected. The list shall include the organization each member represents;

b. A sample of the customer notification with a description of the method and frequency of its distribution;

c. A sample of the authorization form provided to customers; and

d. The date of implementation.

Program plans for new customer contribution funds shall be rejected if not in compliance with this rule.

19.15(3) *Notification.* Each utility shall notify all customers of the fund at least twice a year. The method of notice which will ensure the most comprehensive notification to the utility's customers shall be employed. Upon commencement of service and at least once a year, the notice shall be mailed or personally delivered to all customers. The other required notice may be published in a local newspaper(s) of general circulation within the utility's service territory. A utility serving fewer than 6,000 customers may publish their semiannual notices locally in a free newspaper, utility newsletter or shopper's guide instead of a newspaper. At a minimum the notice shall include:

a. A description of the availability and the purpose of the fund;

b. A customer authorization form. This form shall include a monthly billing option and any other methods of contribution.

19.15(4) *Methods of contribution.* The utility shall provide for contributions as monthly pledges, as well as one-time or periodic contributions. Each utility may allow persons or organizations to contribute matching funds.

19.15(5) *Annual report.* On or before September 30 of each year, each utility shall file with the board a report of all the customer contribution fund activity for the previous fiscal year beginning July 1 and ending June 30. The report shall be in a form provided by the board and shall contain an accounting of the total revenues collected and all distributions of the fund. The utility shall report all utility expenses directly related to the customer contribution fund.

19.15(6) *Binding effect.* A pledge by a customer or other party shall not be construed to be a binding contract between the utility and the pledgor. The pledge amount shall not be subject to delayed payment charges by the utility.